



SAN JUAN-RIO GRANDE NATIONAL FORESTS

Weminuche Wilderness Required Registration



In 2014, the San Juan and Rio Grande National Forests will begin requiring recreationists to register prior to entering the Weminuche Wilderness. Registration will consist of a short two-part form (*see example below*) available online, at agency offices and major trailheads. An individual or group leader will fill out the form, deposit one part into a secure box at the trailhead and keep the other part while in the Wilderness.

There are no fees associated with the program, and it will not impose additional limits on use. Educational contacts and information distribution will be emphasized for the first two to three years of implementation, and then the agency will shift to enforcement, with citations for non-compliance issued.

PURPOSE:

- To help the agency better monitor use trends,
- To gauge the effectiveness of efforts to slow and/or reverse negative impacts,
- To remind visitors of Wilderness regulations.

Monitoring over the past 14 years indicates adverse impacts from recreational activities in some portions of the Weminuche are approaching or exceeding thresholds established by the *1998 San Juan-Rio Grande National Forests Wilderness Management Direction*.

Impacts include high campsite densities, denuded vegetation, damage from firewood collection, soil sterilization from illegal campfires, impact to lakeshores and wetlands, degraded water quality from improper disposal of human waste, overcrowding, and less opportunity for solitude, an important Wilderness value.

Required Registration:

- **WILL** be required for all recreational users entering from any entry point (one registration per party);
- **WILL** be required for both day use and multi-day camping trips;
- **WILL** be made available free at trailheads, agency offices and online;
- **WILL** be the responsibility of Wilderness visitors to acquire, fill out, and carry in a visible manner during their entire trip in the Weminuche;
- **WILL** be enforced by forest officers spring through fall for the entire Weminuche.

Required Registration:

- **WILL NOT** change current limits for numbers allowed in a party or length of stay;
- **WILL NOT** apply to other Wilderness areas;
- **WILL NOT** impose any fees or other new restrictions;
- **WILL NOT** apply to emergency services, such as search and rescue operations and wild-land firefighting efforts;
- **WILL NOT** apply to those with valid grazing permits, mining claims or those accessing private inholdings.

Required registration programs have been shown to improve the agency's ability to monitor use patterns, while better informing visitors on how to reduce their impacts upon natural resources and the experiences of others. Required registration programs are common in other Wilderness areas across the West. In the Rockies, for example, the U.S. Forest Service requires registration for the Maroon Bells, Mount Massive and Cloud Peak Wilderness areas, among others.

The San Juan and Rio Grande National Forests will be accepting public feedback until August 31, 2013 on how to make our implementation of required registration work most effectively for the public and the agency. We welcome ideas on how best to implement specific aspects of the new program, such as:

- What should the registration form look like
- Where/how should it be made available
- Required season of use for registration
- External partners/funding sources
- How to display registration tags
- Education techniques/methods
- Compliance and enforcement strategies
- How to handle commercial outfitters and guides, institutional and scientific research organizations
- How to accommodate frequent users, such as those who make short day trips into the Weminuche on a regular basis
- Other implementation specifics?

Please submit your questions, suggestions, and recommendations to weminuche@fs.fed.us or by regular mail to:

San Juan National Forest, 15 Burnett Court, Durango, CO 81301 Attn: Brian White

Wilderness Registration Form Example

Front side

WILDERNESS USE REGISTRATION

• PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY
• DEPOSIT THIS COPY IN BOX

The purpose of this registration form is to (1) obtain accurate wilderness visitor use data and (2) to educate visitors.

Date Trip Begins	Date Trip Ends	
Point of Entry (Trail)	Point of Exit (Trail)	
Party Leader Name and Zip Code		
name	zip code	
address (optional)		
Number of People	Number of Stock	Number of Dogs
Expected Destinations / Camp Locations		Number of Nights
		
I agree to abide by all laws, rules and regulations which apply to this area and will do my best to see that everyone in our group does likewise.		
Visitor's Signature		Date

Visitor must have this registration form in possession during wilderness visit.

May 2002

Back side


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CLOUD PEAK WILDERNESS

The following acts are prohibited in the Cloud Peak Wilderness.

1. Groups or individuals entering or being in the Cloud Peak Wilderness without a self-issue registration signed and in possession of the group for each visit.
2. Building, maintaining, attending or using a campfire, other than a self-contained chemical stove above 9200'. Below 9200' campfires must be contained on a fire blanket or within a fire pan or enclosed stove so as not to be directly on the ground nor built, maintained, attended or used within 300 feet of lakes, streams, or Forest Service designated trails.
3. Possessing, storing, or transporting any part of tree including branches, limbs or trunk above 9200'.
4. Camping within 100' of all lakes, streams or other free flowing waters.
5. Hitching, tethering or hobbling a horse or other saddle or pack animal to a live tree, except while loading or unloading.
6. Hitching, tethering or hobbling a horse or other saddle or pack animal within 100' of lakes or streams except when loading or unloading.
7. Failure to dispose of debris including camp structures such as hitching racks, tent frames, and pegs after the use period.
8. Using the Cloud Peak Wilderness with a group larger than 10 people and/or with more than 15 head of recreation stock in any group. Larger groups than permitted must split into separate groups which meet the group size limits and must remain a minimum of 1/2 mile apart even at campsites. Groups may have an additional 2 people in their group over the 10 person maximum party size if a member of the group is trained in Leave No Trace outdoor skills and ethics and they have a copy of their certification with them.
9. Camping at sites posted as being closed to camping.
10. Short cutting a switchback on a trail.
11. Possessing or using a wagon, cart, wheelbarrow, bicycle, or other vehicle (including "game carts") (261.57 [h]).

1-800-332-4100
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